

## PERFIN CHAT

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It appears that the question as to what one should collect in the perfin line has been raised by many and not fully answered. Perhaps a few comments by one who not only has a large collection but is acquainted with many other collections, will be helpful to some who are making a start.

There are three main divisions of perfins depending upon the purpose for which they were made. First:—perforated postage, where the punching has been done as a protective measure against theft. This section includes airmails, special deliveries, etc. There are the natural subdivisions covering the various countries with United States perfins heading the list.

The second main division comprises revenue stamps which have been punched with company initials as a method of cancellation. Such punching is not subject to postoffice regulations with the result that many 'types' are so long as to extend over two or even three stamps. Incidentally, this inability to find complete initials on a single stamp presents a handicap which adds to the interest in collecting perfin revenues,—but, the collector must get over his natural dislike of 'splits.'

The third division based upon

upon reasons for use includes those stamps which have been punched by postal authorities in place of more customary surcharges, — sometimes to show that a stamp is valid for use in another district or country—sometimes to show that a postal issue is to be used on official service, and doubtless there are other punchings in this class. The writer regards this division of perfins as the most interesting of all, perhaps because its specimens are rather scarce and difficult to acquire. Scott's catalog recognizes officials having the surcharge 'OS' but fails to pay attention when the equivalent 'OS' is punched. The reason for this distinction is not clear. An article is being prepared for Perfins on this subject and assistance from readers will be appreciated.

Collections of U. S. postal perfins are, of course, most popular as these are the perfins most commonly found. Some collectors keep only one of each type, while a few try to have two of each type, mounting one face up and the other face down. Probably most collectors, including the writer, take in the different issues of the various types. This not only makes a better showing but the range of issues used by a company,—with their different postmarks, gives considerable information regarding the companies which is not to be found from single specimens.

Assuming that one is collecting 'issues,' a further question naturally arises,—should he go farther and pay attention to the minor varieties? Such minor varieties include (a) inverts, (b) obverts, (c) inverted obverts, (d) sideways up, (e) sideways down, (f) diagonal up, (g) diagonal down, (h) inv. diagonal up, (i) inv. diag. down, (j,k,l,m,) obverts of four preceding, (n) double punching, (o) triple punching (perhaps), etc.

The writer made one big mistake in the beginning when he started to collect and describe all these minor varieties. After filling six albums, he realized the foolishness of the procedure and that he was apparently alone in paying attention to all these minor details. It was a long and tedious task,—the throwing into the discard of all of these varieties retaining only one of each issue. Surely the field for 'perfin issue' collection is large enough for even the most ambitious collector, but more about this in a later issue.